



Water Quality NewsFlash

Published by California Department of Transportation, Division of Environmental Analysis, Office of Storm Water Policy

January 9, 2006

Number 06-02

Nutrients – Forests may contribute – It is generally assumed that runoff from forests contains minimal amounts of nutrients. Recent research in the Sierras, however, indicates that in some circumstances the nutrient loading from forest surface runoff can be substantial: ammonia ($\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$) as high as 87 mg/l, nitrates ($\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$) as high as 95 mg/l, and phosphates ($\text{PO}_4\text{-P}$) as high as 24 mg/l. These values are substantially higher than recommended for most waters. The researchers suggest that fire suppression in these areas may be contributing by allowing the buildup of organic debris on the forest floor. These results will have implications for TMDLs that are attempting to reduce nutrient loading to waterways, such as the TMDL for Lake Tahoe. Article: *Inconspicuous Nutrient Laden Surface Runoff From Mature Forest Sierran Watersheds* <http://www.springer.com/sgw/cda/frontpage/0.11855.4-0-70-35552126-0.00.html?referer=www.wkap.nl> – click "Online version available", then Vol. 163.

Water Quality Attainment Strategy – An alternative to the SF Bay diazinon TMDL – In the current 303(d) list of impaired waterways, San Francisco Bay is listed for diazinon, a previously common pesticide. However, the Bay no longer shows ambient toxicity related to diazinon or other pesticides. Diazinon is being phased out for residential uses and is also being better controlled during agricultural uses. Although the State intends to delist diazinon as a cause of impairment in the Bay, the Regional Water Quality Control Board is concerned that new pesticides may cause toxicity problems for the Bay in the future. (See *NewsFlash 05-47* item on pyrethroid pesticides). Consequently, the Board intends to proceed with the development of a *water quality attainment strategy* (WQAS) for pesticides in Bay waters. The WQAS is like a preventative TMDL and will include monitoring and implementation activities.

The WQAS will be developed with the support of the Clean Estuary Partnership (CEP), a collaborative effort of the Regional Board, the Bay Area Clean Water Agencies (sewage treatment), and the Bay Area Stormwater Management Agencies Association. Information on CEP: <http://www.cleanestuary.org/index.cfm> Diazinon WQAS mtg. notes: fkrieger@msn.com

Public Education – Chico study indicates limited public understanding – A recent study in the Chico area resulted in the following conclusions:

“... 90% of those surveyed had not heard or did not know if they had heard any storm water pollution related messages within the last year.... When asked if the storm drains and sewer systems share the same underground pipes, 64% believed that they did or that they did not know if they did or not, only 35% knew the storm drains and sewer systems did not share the same underground pipes. When asked if storm water flows through the storm drains and goes to a treatment facility to be processed to remove pollutants, only 37% knew that storm water is not processed at a treatment plant.”

Posted: <http://www.buttecounty.net/publicworks/stormwater/SurveyResultsNarrative.pdf>

WQ NewsFlash is a weekly update of storm water and related news for the Department. *Verify information before taking action on these bulletins.* Contact Betty Sanchez, Betty_Sanchez@dot.ca.gov (916) 653-2115, or Fred Krieger, (510) 843-7889, fkrieger@msn.com with questions or to be added or deleted from e-mail list. Posted online at: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/stormwater/publicat/newsflash/index.htm>